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inized that no one mission was equal to the task. If such a work was to be done in any way, co-operation was absolutely necessary. Steps to this end began about 1904-5. Four mission boards joined hands in the project, viz., American Baptist, Canadian Methodist, English Friends, and Methodist Episcopal. The first classes were opened in the spring of 1910. During these early years of waiting and preparation it became evident that for such an educational institution as was contemplated it was necessary to lay the foundations in a system of primary and secondary schools. This brought about the formation of the West China Christian Educational Union. Included in this were not only the four missions originally uniting to found the university, but also all of the Protestant missions then operating in West China. The growth of this aspect of the work has passed beyond all expectations. Starting with voluntary workers who could give a few odd hours to the cause, it has developed until now there is a competent general secretary, a fair-sized office staff, and a Chinese secretary. Of these primary and secondary schools there are now more than 1,000 under the auspices of the Union. Courses

of study, recommended texts, outlines of subjects, regular yearly examinations, instructions to teachers and superintendents, short-term normal courses, etc., are all provided. In this system of schools is a basis for supply of university patronage, and that always enlarging, always tested and trained in their own schools. These students, added to those who come from government middle and other schools, bring to the university all of the patronage for which it can provide. The university began with a few modest courses; now it has numerous divisions, faculties, and departments. So far this union plan has worked remarkably well. It enables each church participating to do far more than it could have done alone under circumstances ever so favorable. The system is practical. It provides many opportunities of co-operation among the different religious bodies and of securing the goodwill of leaders in various branches of government educational work. All classes of the Chinese—officials, gentry, and common people—treat the missionary workers most cordially and demonstrate their confidence by sending their sons to them to be instructed. The West China Union University project is a success.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Play in Religious Education

The editor of the *Graded Sunday School Magazine*, January, believes that "a notable gain in the higher life of the race has come in the gradual change of attitude of the church toward play and recreation." In the eighteenth century Francke of Halle wrote: "Play must be forbidden in any and all of its forms. The children shall be instructed in such a manner as to show them, through the presentation of religious principles, the wastefulness and folly of all play. They shall be led to see that play will distract their minds from God, the Eternal Good, and will work nothing but

harm to their spiritual lives." This represents the attitude of many earnest and devout people of the eighteenth and even of the nineteenth century. While there is not yet a widespread effort by the churches to provide for the play needs of children and the recreational needs of young people and adults, the growing tendency is quite different from that indicated above. Actual moral values inhere in various forms of play. This fact, which is recognized by clear-visioned religious teachers, needs yet wider recognition. The churches should and will soon recognize these play values and will plan in intelligent, generous, and

systematic ways for utilizing them. The literature dealing with the significance of play has been enriched in recent years by a number of worthwhile books. The most important of these without exception treat of play from the standpoint of general education. There is yet to be produced a thoroughgoing treatise on the value of play in moral and religious education, together with a presentation of principles and methods, especially with a view to their application in the work of the modern church school. Of the books already available, that by Joseph Lee, *Play in Education*, is one of the most valuable. His theory of play seems to be very near to the true position. He says: "To the child play is the most important thing there is. It is primary, comes first in interest, represents real life; it is what all the rest is for. It is difficult, making an infinite and insatiable demand for power and courage. It is authoritative, required, not to be slighted without shame. Play is the child. In it he wreaks himself. It is the letting loose of what is in him, the active projection of the force he is, the becoming of what he is to be." But with the recognition of the value of this treatise it is to be regretted that the author does not treat the relation of play to the growth of the moral and the religious life. The editor concludes his discussion with a valuable list of the most important books on this subject.

The Most Important Factor in the Sunday-School Problem

The Sunday school is a powerful and significant agency in the realm of religious training. It is not surprising that so much emphasis is placed upon it in modern religious thought and literature. There is no established agreement as to what constitutes the most important factor in the Sunday-school problem. The emphasis seems to vary with the viewpoint of the individual who is seeking for a solution

of the problem. The *American Church Sunday-School Magazine*, January, quotes from the *Church News* an article on this subject. In this it is vigorously contended that the personality and training of the teacher is the most important factor in the whole range of Sunday-school problems. It is asserted that "religious education is a task, the mastery of which will mean a solution of any number of parochial problems, both practical and theoretical. The hardest thinking of the church for the next generation ought to be devoted to religious education and its kindred subjects. The encouraging progress of the last decade ought to be carried on to something approaching completion. Religious education, we rejoice to say, has become a study of scientific tendencies. It has become a thing of experiments and laboratories. More and more are men and women training for careers of administration in Sunday-school organization and methods. Two questions ought always to be kept in mind: (1) What, in religious education, is the thing to be done? and (2) Who is to do it?"

Heretofore we have not been altogether clear as to the object in our Sunday-school endeavor. Certainly it is more than to train children in the worship and customs of the church in order that as they grow older they may take their part in its services with decorum and intelligence. It is more than teaching children and youth the creeds and seeing that they are intellectually sound in the faith. It is more than inculcating devotion to the church as an institution. All of these are important, but they are only means to an end, and that end is Christian character. Such character is to be attained not later, but now in every stage of development from childhood to maturity. The impartation of Christian character is not a simple thing. It is not a matter of books, grades, or methods, but of personality. The whole power of Christianity lies in personality. The power of

Jesus was not what he said, but his personality. Most of his ethical teachings can be duplicated from the great religions of the world. His uniqueness was in the spirit and character of the life he lived. The whole life of the child is imitation or response to personality. With this true the keystone of religious education is the personality of the teacher. The home, parents, priest, all are important, but in the conditions under which we live today the most of religious education is and must be done by the teacher if it is done at all. "A few years ago a noted aviator, who has since lost his life, took an old abandoned aeroplane which nobody had been able to operate, and flew around Staten Island with it as if it had been a powerful Bleriot. When he landed he remarked, 'You can fly a kitchen table if you have the right kind of a motor.' So it is with the Sunday school. If you have the right kind of teachers you can run your Sunday school with a Mother Goose book." But to secure competent teachers you must provide adequate teacher-training.

The Church College and the School in the Local Church

The *Pilgrim Magazine of Religious Education* has a department designated "An Open Forum in Religious Education," which is conducted by Professor Walter S. Athearn. In the January issue there is a discussion of the church college and the school in the local church. Attention is directed first to the fact that the church colleges of the United States are built on the public schools. In co-operation with

state colleges they assist in establishing entrance requirements and defining units of credit, teaching conditions, qualifications for teachers, etc. It is through this process that the high schools have become standardized.

Today there is a nation-wide demand for the standardization of Bible-study. In more than twenty states the North Dakota plan has been introduced in some form. Bible-study conducted under church auspices is asking for academic rating by public high schools and state colleges. To what agency should we look for the standardization of Bible-study? Is it not the business of the church college? Why should not the church colleges be built on the church schools? Why should not the church colleges do for the schools in the local church what they help to do for the public schools? Why should they not determine teaching conditions, supervise organization and administration, fix units of credit, and establish teacher-training standards? Professor Athearn asks: "Will not some member of the Council of the Church Boards of Education explain to the readers of the Open Forum why church colleges do nothing to standardize the local church schools, why they are silent when the church schools are asking for academic credit, and why the Council of Church Boards of Education has done nothing to improve the quantity or quality of biblical teaching in church colleges? Do Church Boards of Education exist to assist in developing a system of secular schools under church management to compete with state schools, or do they have a specific service to the church and the cause of religious education?"

CHURCH EFFICIENCY

A Forward Step for Baptist Sunday Schools

By direction of the International Lesson Committee the "Uniform Series of Sunday School Lessons" is discontinued. In its place beginning with January, 1918, is

offered an "Improved Uniform Series." This is a significant forward step in the work of the Sunday school in the Baptist denomination. The *Watchman-Examiner*, January 3, comments on this editorially. In the former lesson-plan there was one title, one